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ABSTRACT

As part of a continuing effort by the Indiana Department of Public Instruction to share practical, easy-to-implement reading techniques, this booklet offers a collection of teaching activities under various topics related to reading. Of the eight sections in the booklet, four deal with writing, because an anticipated outgrowth of improved skill in writing is the improvement of reading ability. The first of these sections offers class activities and topics for writing, while the next three sections discuss using media as a springboard to writing, centering on children's literature, and moving from thought to print in the communication process. The last four sections of the booklet offer activities for vocabulary development, motivation techniques for "turning on the turned-off reader," questioning techniques for improving student comprehension, and a discussion of the concept of readability. (RL)

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MORE ABOUT READING

Reading Effectiveness Program

Division of Reading Effectiveness
Indiana Department of Public Instruction
Harold H. Negley, Superintendent

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SUPERINTENDENT'S MESSAGE

A primary goal of the Indiana Department of Public Instruction has been the formulation of a statewide reading-communication network. The establishment of the Division of Reading Effectiveness has served as a vehicle for providing the leadership and direction at the state level necessary for realizing such a goal.

More than ever before, teachers and administrators from across the state are learning new instructional methods, observing new techniques of teaching, sharing ideas - in short, communicating - with the end result being the development and implementation of more viable reading programs.

We cordially invite parents and educators to participate in our State Sponsored Reading Conferences and to share in what we believe to be a very successful educational endeavor.

Harold H. Negley

PREFACE

The Division of Reading Effectiveness initiated statewide reading conferences during the fall of 1973. The objectives and expectations at that time were that the reading conferences would provide Hoosier educators--teachers, administrators and parents--with practical, easy-to-implement reading techniques. These have proven to be very successful in enhancing the already existing instructional methods of teachers.

Over one hundred conferences, 20,000 participants and four years later, the Division of Reading Effectiveness invites you to join in our current venture to explore "More About Reading".

RIGHTING WRITING

Because people cannot see the color of words, the time of words, the secret ghostly motions of words -- Because they cannot hear the whispering of words, the rustling of the procession of letters, the dream-flutes and dream drums which are thinly and weirdly played by words --

Because they cannot perceive the pouting of words, the frowning of words, and fuming of words, the weeping, the raging and racketing and rioting of words --

Because they are insensible to the phosphorescing of words, the fragrance of words, the noisomeness of words, the tenderness or hardness, the dryness or juiciness of words, the interchange of values in the gold, the silver, the brass and the copper of words --

Is that any reason why we should not try to make them hear, to make them see, to make them feel?

Lafcadio Hearn, author and journalist, 1850-1904.

It is an accepted fact that words are power. The power to persuade others, influence decisions, express feelings, convey ideas and communicate information all comes from the ability to use the written word. How is it possible to teach this skill? The answer is that there are many various ways of teaching writing skills. Some suggestions and observations follow for helping students achieve the ability to write. An anticipated outgrowth of improved skill in writing is the improvement of reading ability. Like speaking and listening, writing and reading go together, and the development of one skill should lead to the development of the other.

WHY

A writer is a person speaking to another by use of the written word -- an obvious and simple statement. However, the writer's accomplishment is measured by his reader's understanding of what is written. If the writer is understood, then he has accomplished his mission.

Emphasizing only what not to do in writing may inhibit the development of ability/skill. True, rules must be stressed and followed; but if "don't's" are constantly brought to the attention of a beginning or developing writer, this may tend to discourage his willingness to be creative or unique in style. It is sometimes much wiser to note some aspect worthy of praise (and there almost always is something) than to be critical of every fault. Perhaps a good practice would be to narrow the examination to a few areas rather than to search for every flaw. For example, with one writing assignment, punctuation and capitalization might be closely scrutinized. For another assignment, the focus might be topic sentences and transitions.

Important to the writer's development is his understanding of why one manner of writing is acceptable and another is not. This should be made clear at each step in the growth of writing ability. As often as possible, an individual conference with each student is advisable. In this way, any questions that the writer might have or further suggestions that the teacher might wish to offer may be dealt with on a personal basis. This process is, of course, very time-consuming, but the value to be gained is well worth the investment.

WHEN

A comment should be made here about the frequency of writing assignments. It is impossible to specify what is best in terms of the number of assignments -- too few, and the necessary skills are not developed; too many, and students' interest may fade.

One solution to this problem is the use of both class tasks and free writing. The latter is writing done by students in their free time.

In encouraging this activity, a teacher should make it clear that what is created in free writing is not to be graded and is only seen by the teacher if the student so desires. One structured type of free writing is keeping a diary or journal.

WHAT

With a diary or journal, the content is already established -- whatever events or feelings the writer deems worthy of noting. Writing is, of course, always about something, since words refer to things and ideas.

A point of consideration with any writing task is the limitation placed upon the beginning writer by his experience and knowledge (or lack of them). As often as possible, an array of topics or ideas should be offered for the student. Learning to write can be difficult enough without adding the burden of having to write about something which is totally alien. It is not always possible to suggest a topic which is familiar, but the number of times that this occurs should be kept to a minimum. When it is necessary to do so, some amount of class time prior to the assignment should be devoted to reading about and discussing the topic. This will better equip the writer to meet the challenge of clear, well-written expression. Giving students some possible topics to write about will "get the wheels turning" and help them on the way to writing.

EVALUATION

With many writing tasks, students should be allowed and encouraged to have their peers read and make positive, as well as critical, comments before the assignments are turned in. In this way, students can discover their effectiveness in expressing themselves. This

process is also a useful means of eliminating some commonly made errors and serves as a device for proofreading -- before the teacher enters into the act.

After other students and the teacher have had the opportunity of reading and commenting about a particular assignment, it is often good practice to have the student rewrite the piece, making the suggested changes. In this way, the writer is made more conscious of the types of errors he is committing and can then concentrate on correcting them in future situations.

STUDENT ACTIVITIES

1. Pick ten words for which you can find rhymes. Write the words in columns and write the rhyming words beneath them. Choose one of the sets of words and use it to write a rhyming commercial. You might also ask some of your classmates to clap their hands when they hear your rhyming words.
2. Write down the names of ten of your favorite things. Select one of these and list at least five words that describe what you have selected. See if you can now construct a poem using the words you have listed.
3. From a story you have recently read or from a newspaper or magazine, copy down at least ten common nouns. See how quickly one of your classmates can provide a proper noun for each word you give him.

state	lake
month	planet
school	comedian
team	motorcycle

After completion of this activity, see if all of the proper nouns can be used in a story.

4. Clip several headlines from newspaper or magazine stories and write compositions which will match each headline. Another possible use of a headline is employing it as the first line of a story (a "story starter").
5. From a magazine, newspaper or story, find an example of each of the four kinds of sentences (interrogative, imperative, declarative and exclamatory). Take each of the sentences and change it into another type.
6. Find four articles and four pictures about a subject in which you have an interest. Read the articles for details and then design a cover for the articles and pictures. Display the finished products in your classroom. Now, go one step further and write an original story about the topic you have chosen.
7. Select a popular song and write the lyrics of the song. Write a sentence which expresses the main idea of the song. Using the song as your basis, write a story which restates or expands upon the main idea. Bring the record to class and play it. Read your story to the class and see if your classmates agree with your interpretation. Another possibility would be to select several details from a popular song, to write a story using the same details and then compare your version with that of others in the class and with the song writer.
8. Find copies of newspapers printed on your birthday. (This search will, of course, take some time, but it provides an excellent opportunity for discussing research skills.) After locating the newspapers, read about what was happening when you were born and write about the world into which you entered.

9. An alternative to keeping a diary or journal is to create a calendar and note on each day something that happened. Later you might take these brief daily notes and weave them into a longer story about a week's or month's events. (This activity has more appeal for some students because it requires less writing.)
10. Everyone has opinions about the rules by which he must act at school, at home and in different public places. "Speaking out" provides the opportunity of reacting to these rules. After you have stated your own opinion, reverse that opinion and write from the opposite point of view. (This exercise provides good experience in rethinking an issue.)

TEACHER ACTIVITIES

1. Sort through a newspaper, magazine or book and find words which relate to the seasons. Select one or more of the words and use it in writing a Haiku poem. Haiku poetry consists of three lines. The first line contains five syllables, the second line has seven syllables, and the last line also has five syllables. A common characteristic of Haiku poetry is that it usually is written about nature or the seasons. Illustrating the poem could be an additional activity. Perhaps several students could select one season and decorate a bulletin board.
2. Provide the class with a group of verbs that relate to a particular activity like boating, swimming, shopping, etc. For example, with basketball you might list "dribble, pass, jump, shoot and foul." In a writing exercise, use all of the verbs or synonyms for these verbs.
3. Clip several stories from a newspaper and underline the topic sentence. Discuss the importance of using topic sentences.

Another possibility would be to rewrite a news story without the topic sentences and have students judge which story is more effective.

4. Read a short story (probably no longer than five minutes) to the class. Ask the students to paraphrase the story in their own words. Select two or three students to read their paraphrases to compare accuracy with the original.

5. Make a tape of interesting or unusual sounds -- perhaps those at ballgames, at a bus station or in a pinball arcade. Have students listen to the tape and note the various sounds they hear, emphasizing the selection of key words that indicate the place of activity and the types of sounds they hear. After listening and noting what they heard, some students may want to listen to the tape again to fill in gaps. The next step is to ask students to describe as vividly as possible what is taking place. A good point to make is to have students imagine themselves taking part in the activity. A variation of this type of writing is to ask students to imagine themselves as some object rather than a person and to describe their activity. A spin-off of this exercise is to allow students to make tapes themselves and to use them in class as stimuli.

6. It is commonly agreed that making use of a student's own language is an excellent strategy for enticing students to read more. The appeal of such a method lies in large part in the fact that students are given the opportunity of dealing with their own speech patterns and vocabulary. By using a language experience approach to reading instruction, the teacher is able to help the

student become more proficient in reading by starting with what a student already understands. Once you are able to involve a student in reading and examining his own work, it should be possible to create or extend interest into other reading materials. What are some good topics to write about? The answer is that there are literally thousands of suitable subjects. Below are some suggestions that could be used to get students to share their experience and to become involved in the writing-reading dyad.

Possible Theme or Paragraph Titles

A Boring Day
A Puzzle Unsolved
A Midnight Raid
Midsummer Madness
Fire! Fire!
The Accidental Hero
An Embarrassing Moment
Stumbling Through
Dance or Die
First Time on Skates
Halloween Fright
Ghost Story
Wreck!
Sky Ride
No Time to Lose
Medicine Trouble
Saved by the Doctor
Hurry, Christmas!
Grounded
They Didn't Understand
The Monster
Waiting for News
Then I Woke Up
Clutching Claws
My Pet's a Nuisance
Little Brother (Sister)
Unexpected Reward
The State Fair
A Skiing Accident
My Grandfather (Grandmother)
Lost in the Woods
Alone
The Dog Chased Me
Sleeping Bags
Strange Noises
A Practical Joke

Life as a Shoe (or anything)
Boy! Was I Stupid!
Caught!
First Snow
Please Don't Bother Me
Crushed
Waves at the Beach
Study Hall
Campfire
My Cubicle
Cutting Line
Undecided
I Won (Lost)
Our Attic
The Cafeteria
Too Late
Birthdays
The Concert
Things Just Didn't Work Out
Learning to Drive
Alarm Clocks
I Was So Hungry (Full)
I Talked to a Martian
The Locker Room
I Don't Understand Why
My Happiest Moment
An Empty Church
Pens That Won't Write
I Lied for a Good Reason
A Water Fight
I Was Called to the Office
Writing Notes
Intramurals
Our Team
My Cycle
Tryouts

First Day at School
My "Friend" Was No Friend
Betrayed
Mom (Dad) Doesn't Understand
I Thought I'd Die
First Love
A Special Gift
Promise Broken
Why Can't I?
Cheating
First Job
Tests
The Park at Night
Don't Worry
I Thought It Would Never End
Teachers
Falling Out of a Desk
Speech
My Favorite Place
I Hate Peas (any vegetable)
The Funeral
I Am an American
Too Many People
Let's Slow Down
My Favorite Music
What an Interesting Person
Babysitting
Up All Night
What I Want Most
Me
The Great Hassle

As can be seen from the wealth of ideas presented, it can become a challenging task for both student and teacher to get the "wheels turning" in the direction of creative writing. The incorporation of media into writing can prove to be exciting, as evidenced in the following materials.

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MEDIA AS A SPRINGBOARD TO WRITING

Writing is just talk written down. Students need to understand this relationship between the spoken word and the printed word. Even the very young child comes to school with a spoken language he has learned for the purpose of communication. Although he is unable to write, he can dictate his thoughts to another person to be written. Older students benefit from helping younger students put their thoughts into words.

Young children should be given every opportunity to translate words into something meaningful to them. After a painting or drawing lesson, ask students for a caption to go with their pictures or ask them to write what the animals or people are saying. Gradually the word-picture ratio is reversed.

Finding something to write about is difficult for students of all ages. Students need to be given a springboard before they begin writing. Various media can be used to provide a variety of stimulants.

One of the most available forms of media is a picture, if an appropriate assignment accompanies its use. Pictures can be used to develop vocabulary and to encourage ideas. Key words are written on the board as students discuss the picture. This list is then available as a vocabulary or spelling aid when students begin writing.

The options chosen will vary according to the picture and the grade level.

1. Who or what do you see in the picture?
2. What is happening?
3. Do you see anything sad (funny, humorous, pathetic) in this picture?
4. Pretend that you are that person, animal or thing and tell what you are doing or what is going to happen next.

5. Would you like to be in this picture?

6. What are these people saying to each other?

7. What is this person thinking?

9. What might happen in this place?

It is helpful to select and file pictures for this purpose. Useful pictures or drawings are often found in books or other sources from which they cannot be removed. In such a situation, use this process:

TRACING TRANSFERS

Materials Needed:
picture (choose one with few details)
onion skin paper
medium soft pencil

Directions:

1. Place the onion skin paper over the picture and trace it with the pencil.

2. Turn the onion skin paper over and place it on the material to which it is to be transfered.

3. Trace the picture again. The penciled lines will appear. The picture will be reversed.

4. If the reverse of the original is not workable in a particular situation, turn the onion skin paper over again and trace it for the third time.

Coloring books are often a good resource of pictures for younger children. These pictures do not need to be traced and can be used several times if the following process is used.

COLORING BOOK TRANSFER

This is a process by which you can transfer a picture from a coloring book to your own instructional materials, e.g., a file folder. The picture will be reversed.

Materials Needed:
coloring book
metal spoon

Directions:

1. Choose a suitable picture, preferably without printed words.

2. It is easier if you fasten the picture to the materials. Then rub with the bowl of the spoon. The image will be transferred.

3. It will be necessary to outline or color the image.

Magazines provide many good pictures for classroom use, but occasionally an ideal picture will be too small. The appropriate media to use would be a clay lift or slides without a camera.

SLIDES WITHOUT A CAMERA: LIFTING

Lifting involves the transferring of a printed image from paper to clear acetate. The transferred image can then be projected on a screen with a slide projector or an overhead projector.

Materials Needed:
clear Contact paper or self-adhering laminating film
colorful pictures from publications that are printed on clay-coated paper (To identify clay-coated paper, wet a finger and rub gently on a white area of the publication. If the paper is clay-coated, a white residue will remain on your finger. Most quality magazines are printed on clay-coated paper.)
a wooden or metal spoon
container with soapy water
clear plastic spray, such as Krylon (optional)
slide mounts

Directions:

1. The first step is to choose appropriate pictures. Use an empty slide mount as a framing device. Position the mount over the selected picture so that the image to be lifted is properly framed.

2. Cut the Contact paper into 3.5mm x 4.0mm pieces.

3. Place the Contact paper face down on the adhesive side.

4. Using the back of the spoon, rub the entire surface of the picture. Press very hard.

5. Place the picture in the water for a few minutes. Peel the picture from the contact. If peeling is difficult, return it to water for additional soaking.

6. Dry the transparency and spray it with the clear plastic spray.

Cassette tapes meet a variety of needs. Young children may record experience stories to be written by an older person at a more convenient time. Older students may record their own stories and then listen and write them down verbatim. Translating from the spoken to printed word may be difficult if speech errors are made. For this reason, students may choose to revise their tape.

Teacher-made tapes may be used as a motivation for student writing. Students are asked to listen to a tape and take notes on a sequence of sounds. All writing activities need to give students a strong reason to put what they have to say on paper. The purpose of this activity is to guess where the tape was made and what was happening there. Notetaking, sequence, listening and writing are reinforced. After students understand what is expected of them, they may listen to the tape in small groups and then compare notes. It should be stressed that they are not expected to list all sounds but to select those important to their writing. Notes are written and students are directed to read and talk about them. The purpose is to provide each paper with peer reactions and to prepare for printing or writing the final copy. Students make suggestions for changes, including, but not dwelling on, corrections of spelling and punctuation. Dictionaries should be available.

As much use as possible should be made of student writing. Whatever they write should be displayed, projected, enacted or compiled.

Everyone experiences a thrill at seeing his own words in print. A collection of writings or one composition can be made into a book. This book may be exhibited and shared or kept for personal use. Book-making is not difficult; older students can make their own.

BOOK MAKING

Materials Needed:

- paper
- scissors
- stapler
- wide Mystic tape
- colored paper
- light weight cardboard
- fabric
- dry mount paper or iron-on interfacing
- iron

Directions:

1. Fold paper in half to make the pages. Staple or sew the pages together. You may want to complete this step before you give it to the students.

2. Cut two pieces of cardboard 1/4 inch larger than the pages.

3. Lay cardboard beside edge of staples or stitching, attach cardboard to the front page with wide mystic tape.

4. Turn this arrangement face down. Tape the two pieces of cardboard together. Cut off excess tape.

5. Cut two pieces of colored paper that are the same size as the pages before they were folded.

6. Open the book flat. Cut a piece of fabric 1/2 inch larger than the covers and pages.

7. Cut two pieces of dry mount paper or iron-on interfacing the same size as the colored paper.

8. Arrange and center the materials in the following order:
   a. fabric
   b. book (cover and pages)
   c. mounting paper or interfacing
   d. construction paper

9. Fold the fabric over the front cover cardboard and hold in place with small pieces of tape. (Do the corners first.)

10. Make certain the iron-on interfacing is between the cardboard and the colored paper. Iron.

11. Cut and fold in the fabric on the spine of the book.

12. Repeat steps 8 - 10 for the back cover of the book.

The almost limitless use of media can be highly motivational to writers of all ages. The suggested methods were included because of their availability and their lack of need for special equipment. Most suggestions were inexpensive. All ideas could be expanded to include a whole year of writing activities at any grade level.

Once students have delved into the mechanics of bookmaking, they can then sit back and enjoy reading for its own intrinsic value. The ideas presented in the next few pages outline not only the role of the teacher in this process but also indicate a variety of innovative teaching ideas.

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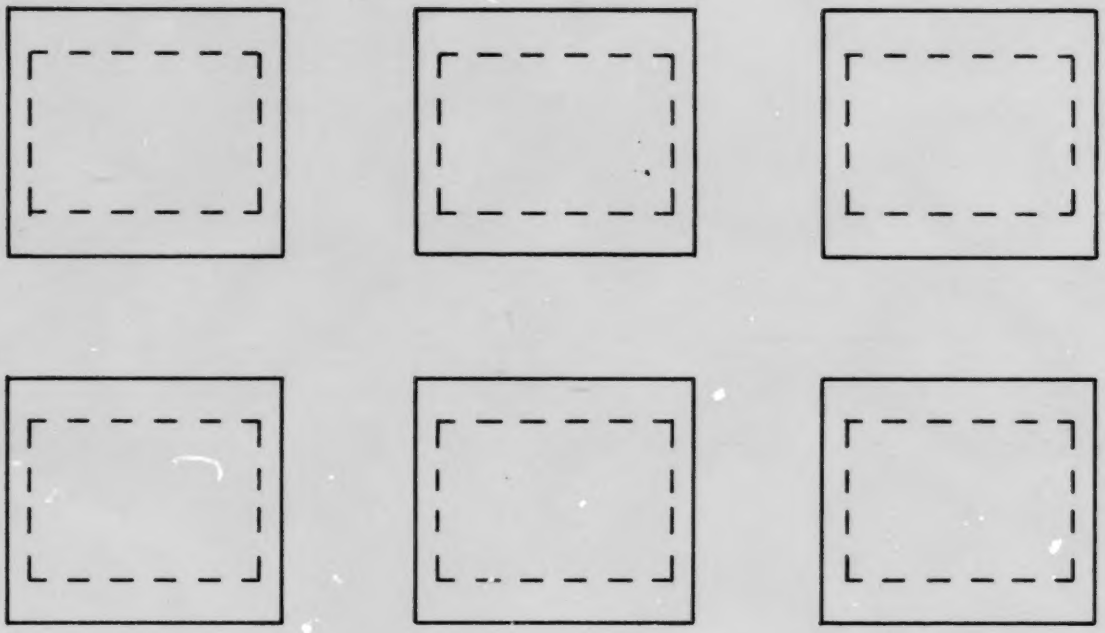
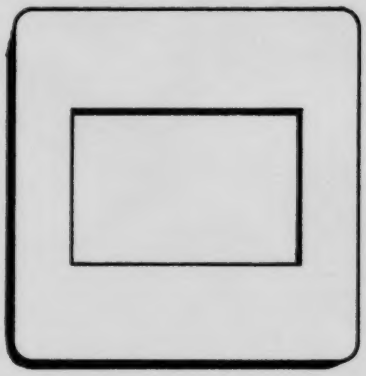
PATTERNS TO DETERMINE PICTURE SIZE FOR SLIDE MOUNTS



SLIDE MOUNT SIZE (FOR COMPARISON)



CENTERING ON CHILDREN'S LITERATURE

Developing in children the ability to enjoy reading is just as important in the school curriculum as skill learning. Our overall goal in reading instruction is to produce an adult society which uses reading as a release, a form of enjoyment and a means of gaining information. In order to obtain this goal, the reading instructional program must be multifaceted. First, students must be provided with skills, and secondly, students must also be provided with an awareness and appreciation of literature. The student who possesses the necessary mechanics for reading and who also enjoys reading will enlarge and expand his world. He will have a greater appreciation for the beauty and the power words and language can have. Through reading, the student's imagination and emotions will be stimulated as he develops new insights.

ROLE OF THE TEACHER

A good teacher serves as a model for students in speaking and should also serve as a model for fostering positive attitudes toward books and reading. There are many opportunities for teachers to help develop an interest in books and to create in students an independence in reading. By combining reading skills development with good literature through the use of reading centers in the classroom, students can learn the values of reading. They can develop an appreciation for the wealth of information to be gained from reading.

Teachers can provide meaningful activities, materials and opportunity for students. They can also: 1) demonstrate their own dependence on books; 2) schedule a time at least once a day to read aloud to students; 3) provide time for students to read; and 4) provide a space

within the classroom for reading. The classroom library and reading room can be a corner with bookshelves, a table, some comfortable reading chairs and perhaps a carpeted area. After the class library is established, students should be encouraged and allowed to use it.

ROLE OF THE CENTER

The literature center should be attractive and inviting. In addition, it should also be informative. The selection of books to be used as a springboard for the reading centers will best be determined by the interests and abilities of the students.

There are several ways to incorporate literature into the center in order to stimulate and motivate students. Some ideas are listed below which could be used. Although many ideas are not new, they are teacher-tested and are effective.

ACTIVITIES

1. Have students write to the author of their favorite book. Chances of receiving a response are enhanced if children are not provided with a form letter to copy. Authors much prefer a spontaneous, sincere letter, even though it may contain spelling errors and may not be grammatically correct. Write to the author in care of the publisher. Display the author's response along with the book or the book jacket. Other books by the same author could be included, plus a section about the author.
2. Organize a Book Character Day for your school or classroom. Provide enough lead time for students to browse, read and discuss many books. They are to choose one character to portray on Book Character Day. In preparation for the day, students are to create a simple costume to wear. They must also prepare a skit or role-play their character. Invite parents, local university

students, high school pupils, etc., to act as judges. Students are to display their costumes, present their book to the judges and visitors and perform their character presentation. The duty of the awards committee is to decide which award each student is to receive. It is important that each person receive an award. For example: Best Dressed, Most Creative Costume, Best Acting, Most Original, Prettiest Girl, Most Handsome Boy.

The following is an example of the kind of awards which can be prepared in advance and filled out during the day's ceremonies:

FIRST PLACE MOST REALISTIC AWARD

This award is presented to

_____

for excellence and outstanding
participation in Book Character Day

_____
character

_____
book

_____
author

3. Encourage students to write advertisements and develop commercials for their favorite book. Incorporate this activity with a study of various advertising and propaganda techniques.
4. Divide students into small heterogeneous groups and instruct each group to develop a promotional campaign to sell their favorite book to a movie producer. They must be prepared to discuss and answer the following questions in a manner which will convince the producer that a movie should be made of the book.

A. Title of book _____

Author _____

B. Title of movie _____

(Decide whether the name of the book would be appropriate for the movie or if the movie title should be more exciting.)

C. Name and brief description of main characters

_____

_____

D. Name of female star to play the lead role

_____

E. Name of male star to play the leading male role

_____

F. Name of movie stars to play supporting roles

_____

G. Promotional slogan to advertise movie

_____

H. Rating to assign movie: G, PG, R or X

_____

I. Brief description of contents of movie

_____

J. If the movie is to be shot on location, where would you suggest it be made?

_____

K. Design a poster advertising the movie.

L. Write a letter to the author and publisher of the book advising him of the movie. Describe the changes you wish to make and ask for his permission.

M. Possible budget

5. Arrange for a book auction to be held in the classroom. Students are to be encouraged to bring in books they want to share and exchange. If an auctioneer in the community is available, invite him into the classroom. Students should furnish the auctioneer with information which would help him sell their book. Another alternative would be to have each pupil sell his own book. If the auctions were held periodically, the same books could be exchanged several times.
6. Ask students to make a scrapbook of their favorite poetry. They should copy the poem and find pictures to illustrate concepts or lines of the poem. Display these so students will have an opportunity to read the poetry selected and illustrated by their classmates.
7. Encourage art activities relating to literature - dioramas, mobiles, pictures, clay models of location of action, scenes, principal characters, events, etc. Making a diorama from cereal is an interesting project, since cereal can be purchased in so many colorful and interesting shapes and sizes. Students should write a brief description on a 5 x 7 card describing their book, the author and what the scene represents.
8. Encourage students to write their own plays and develop dialogue for the characters. This could begin with a simple folk tale. As students become more adept at providing dialogue for the main ideas, more difficult content materials could be introduced. The scripts could be taped and used in a listening center.
9. Provide a checklist for students to evaluate their own literature. The following could be expanded and used as an example.

		YES	NO
I.	Characters:		
	a. Are the characters realistic?	___	___
	b. Do the characters demonstrate attitudes, actions and behavior consistent with their role?	___	___
	c. Are the personalities well developed?	___	___
II.	Plot:		
	a. Is there a smooth transition from one event to the next?	___	___
	b. Does the action and suspense hold the reader's attention?	___	___
	c. Does the action develop naturally?	___	___
III.	Theme:		
	a. Does the story emerge logically from the characters, events and setting?	___	___
	b. Is the story developed through the action and characters?	___	___
	c. Are the ideas and events treated with originality?	___	___
IV.	Style:		
	a. Does the language flow naturally?	___	___
	b. Do the characters have unique and consistent language?	___	___

c. Is the writing imaginative, vivid and interesting? ___ ___

d. Is the language repetitious and dull? ___ ___

10. Establish a Hall of Fame for authors. The class is asked to suggest names of authors that should be included in the Hall of Fame. Nominations are made and a vote is taken. The names of the chosen authors can be inscribed on a scroll and hung in the room.

11. Display a picture or drawing in the classroom, such as a dog sled in Alaska. The class can suggest names of books they would find in an Alaskan setting. The students decide what qualities an Alaskan book should have. The next step is to design a dust cover for the book. The best title is selected from the class suggestions, a synopsis is written and a cover is designed. Other books in the library, for those interested in the same area, should also be included on the jacket. This is a good technique for introducing new social studies units.

12. Focus attention on familiar stories or books and have students develop a series of detective clues. They are to develop three clues for each book. Other students (or other classes) are to guess the name of each character or book from the three clues. for example:

    1. Spider -- pig -- rat (Charlotte's Web)
    2. Scarecrow -- tornado -- Kansas (The Wizard of Oz)
    3. Boy -- fence -- cave (The Adventures of Tom Sawyer)

13. Display a large map of the United States or perhaps a world map or the Western Hemisphere. On the map, have students pinpoint the

location of the stories (or books) they are reading. Display under the map a listing of the book titles. Allow other students to locate the setting for the various books. Place a caption above the titles, "HOW MANY BOOK LOCATIONS CAN YOU IDENTIFY?"

14. Read something to students every day. After students have been exposed to a number of books, have them make up a story using the familiar book titles. For example, find the titles of six books in the following story:

"On a snowy day in January, Homer Price went hunting, looking for the biggest bear in the country. He knew there were bears on Hemlock Mountain. Alas, he did not find any bears, only wild cats. In fact, he began to think there were millions of cats. He gave up and decided to go home and have a vegetarian dinner of the great big enormous turnip he had in the cellar."

Example: Millions of Cats

Inherent in the ability to enjoy reading is the development of effective communication skills. In the next section, entitled "From Thought to Print," creative ideas to enhance listening and speaking are brought to the fore.

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FROM THOUGHT TO PRINT

Consider: communication is similar to a dandelion plant. The roots are thoughts; the stem, the mode of expression (spoken or written); the blossom is the product or message; and finally, the dispersed seeds are ideas being planted. This analogy incorporates all the aspects of the skill labelled communication. Just as the plant grows to maturity, so does skill in communication.

The beginnings are concealed as are roots underground. Infants are receivers of oral expression well before they are forming words themselves. Dr. Elizabeth Hurlock says, "His first words, while interpreted by parents to mean that he has started to talk, are usually parrot speech. The baby mimics simple words he has heard others use and speaks them correctly, but there is no indication that he knows what they mean."[1] If he has limited intake from lack of others speaking to him, he is not able to build a substantial word bank. Conversely, given the experience of hearing distinct speech in his household or from outside sources, he can be well on his way to a good foundation.

Development of a strong, sturdy stem is contingent upon nurturing with attentive cultivation. Parents must do this through positive reinforcement of the child's speech. Setting good patterns and providing timely, supportive corrections is desirable. Teachers take on the task of doing the same thing with written communication in the classroom.

[1] Elizabeth Hurlock, Child Growth and Development (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1970), p. 186.

What if these preferred procedures are not followed? Often they aren't, we know. A child comes to school either talking almost constantly because he recognizes a chance, or hesitant to talk due to restraints imposed in preschool years. He may make pronunciation errors. His vocabulary may be extremely limited. He may have a wide vocabulary of "street" terms or speech that is heavily dialectic. The range of variations is unpredictable.

Given possibilities such as these, teachers (and speech teachers, when available) take on the task of directing children's progress in speaking and writing along with the teaching of reading.

Listen to children. Then offer them: 1) support and respect for the language abilities they have; 2) time to express their thoughts; 3) a learning atmosphere rich in experiences that encourage rather than prohibit oral expression.

Role-playing and dramatizing present an obvious means of determining some of the aspects of children's communication skills. A specific approach is to utilize a telephone as a prop. Having this instrument in hand seems to release the child from some possible inhibitions. Through communication activities, messages blossom. You add shape by guiding and setting good examples. Suggest topics that you identify as fitting with individuals' interests. Draw children out so that they can be comfortable speaking in a relatively controlled setting. An example is to have one describe and display a collection, such as pictures or postcards from a trip.

Completing the analogy, the ideas shared serve two purposes: 1) to add information to listeners, and 2) to provide further insights to you by revealing students' strengths, weaknesses and individuality.

IMPORT FOR READING

Making the connection between thought and speech and printed material is what you want to help the child to do. This, of course, is not an insurance against all reading difficulty, but it is one support system. Draw children into discussion. Encourage them to relate experiences at pertinent times. Ask for opinions. Start simplified reporting early and continue practice in writing reports, growing a little more complex each school year.

Use these kinds of oral expressions as bases for written work. Some you would do with a large group (as an experience chart). Some could be in the form of your taking dictation from individuals or committees. Other writing would come from the youngsters as composition or poetry. The focus is a realization that thoughts and feelings are recorded in writing--that books are full of writers' thoughts.

LISTENING

Of equal importance is sharpening the skills of listening. In early childhood years, we encourage exercises in sound discrimination. We want children to identify specific sounds they hear so that they build an awareness of their environment. Identification and labelling further extend their vocabularies. This helps to eliminate generalized terms such as "I heard a noise" in place of "I heard glass breaking".

In learning to read, sound discrimination enables a child to hear sounds of letters within a word. Therefore, he is better able to use that knowledge in dealing with printed symbols.

Reading aloud with expression (or imagining expressiveness when doing silent reading) is better developed when children have had opportunities to listen to examples. Both parents and teachers are urged to read aloud to children frequently. Cultivate your own vocal expressiveness so that you set a fine pattern.

Concentration is very closely related to listening. The ability to keep one's attention fixed on a particular task despite distracting sounds constitutes concentration. Children need reasons to listen. This promotes their concentration. Be sure to set purposes when you require them to listen.

Communication is truly a two-way avenue to better reading ability. "A reader 'reconstructs a message' by making use of both visual and non-visual information... First, non-visual information involves the student's ability to conceptualize and his previous experience in reading. Second, non-visual information involves the student's knowledge of language and familiarity with the structure and patterns within forms of written discourse."[2]

There are many activities and adaptations thereof to accomplish communications skill building. Perhaps you will find some of the following helpful.

[2] Kenneth Goodman, "Reading: A Thought and Language Process," High School Journal 59 (November, 1975): p. 57.

ACTIVITIES

Focus on Speaking

1. Information Please

Purpose: A. To emphasize that a telephone is a purposeful instrument.
B. To emphasize the necessity to think about what information you need to give before making a call.

Directions: Prepare cards on which are written situations for using a telephone plus suggested information to be given. Distribute these to a few youngsters and have them role-play, with telephone in hand.

Examples:

1. Call your best friend to see if he/she can go to a movie with you.

2. Call your insurance company to report an accident.

3. Call a hobby store to see if it has something you need for a project.

2. Figuring Out Figurative Speech

Purpose: To help students be aware of the prevalence of figurative speech and to grow in their ability to understand it.

Directions: Introduce the concept of figurative language (similes, metaphors, personifications, idioms, hyperboles, colloquialisms). Provide examples of each that you choose to include in your presentations.

Primary: Form small groups (4-5 pupils). Distribute a worksheet on which are 20 similes minus the last word: As bright as _____. Allow five minutes for completion. Award 2 points for each simile completed. As an incentive, if any group can add to the list, award 5 bonus points per addition. The group having the most points is declared "The Most Together Group".

Intermediate: Initiate a search for idioms. Ask students to watch and listen for them. Keep a three-ring notebook of their findings. Provide blank pages on which they can write an idiom or colloquialism, illustrate it and write a sentence using it. Each child should sign his contribution.

Secondary: After assuring yourself that students recognize and are at least acquainted with figurative speech, have them draw upon themselves to make mundane passages more colorful through rewriting.

Example: In the 1800's, New York's population was made up of different nationalities. Hundreds of people came to the city looking for jobs.

In the 1800's, New York was called the American melting pot. Multitudes poured into the city hoping for a new lease on life.

It should be fun to meet the challenge of saying something clearly but colorfully.

3. Mis-communication

Purpose: To point out what occurs if people don't really understand what is said.

Directions: Read an "Amelia Bedelia" story. Students will readily recognize her misinterpretations and enjoy the humor. Then plan and write a similar story together, getting everyone to contribute to the mixed-up plot.

4. Tell Me, Please (Interviewing)

Purpose: To sharpen specific skills, such as:

Formulating worthwhile questions;
Speaking in a clear, undertandable voice;
Developing listening skills;
Expressing appreciation for information received;
Summarizing information received;
Planning ahead to determine information needed.

Directions: Invite a resource person to speak to your class. Together plan what you want to learn from your visitor. Help the students word the questions. Type or print these to be read by student volunteers at the appropriate times during the visit. Ten would be sufficient to allow for a few impromptu questions.

Focus on Listening

1. Did You Really Hear Me?

Purpose: To encourage critical listening before giving a response.

Directions: Make a set of cards (to be added to by the students) on which are "catchy" questions:

Examples:

1. How many birthdays does an average man have?

2. A farmer had 17 sheep. All but 9 died. How many live sheep did he have left?

3. If you take 2 apples from 3 apples, how many do you have?

4. Why is Bob McAdoo called "Dr. Dunk"?

5. If you went to bed at 8 p.m. and set the alarm to get you up at 9 a.m., how many hours sleep would you get?

Students are to read a card to a listener who is to try to hear the "catch" and respond correctly.

2. Tell Me What You Hear.

Purpose: A. To identify both familiar and unfamiliar sounds around us.

B. To recall in sequence what is heard.

Directions: Play a sound effects record for your class. For unfamiliar or unusual sounds, tell them beforehand what the sound will be. Ask for identification. For familiar ones, give no preinformation. Ask for identification. For sequence, play a series of 4-6 sounds, requiring response to be in order and complete.

3. Can You Do It?

Purpose: To listen to and follow more than one direction given.

Directions: Prepare 4 x 6 cards, on each of which are several things to do.

Example:

Go to the board.
Write your middle name.
Open the door.
Turn off the lights.
Sit on the teacher's chair.
Cross your legs.

The respondee must listen to all directions read, remember them in order and follow them. When the students are good at this, increase the list to see who can listen and follow the longest series.

4. The Latest Lyrics

Purpose: To listen for specific information.

Directions: Play a recording of a relatively new song hit. You may ask your class to listen for responses to certain questions involving who, what, where, how, when or why? You may choose, however, to distribute sheets on which the lyrics have been duplicated except for a few missing key words and phrases.

5. Don't Get Lost!

Purpose: To practice listening to geographic directions.

Directions: Give one student a city or state map. Let him plot a starting point, a destination and a route. He gives his information while the others listen. A volunteer or a chosen classmate is then given the map and with felt tip pen traces the directions given.

Concomitant with communication skills is vocabulary development. In the next section are selected examples which hopefully should aid in the development of meaningful student vocabularies.

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VOCABULARY: ITS IMPACT ON READING

A key ingredient in assisting a child to read is to develop the ability to associate or attach meaning to the printed symbol. This must be done in a broad sense, i.e., the word as part of a sentence, the sentence as part of a paragraph and the paragraph as part of a story. The following example illustrates what can occur when word meaning is omitted from word development.

> A father brought his child a box of Cracker Jack. He asked her, "Is the popcorn good?" Her reply was "This is Cracker Jack." He again asked her, "Isn't that popcorn?" Again she informed him that it was Cracker Jack, not popcorn.[1]

Thus, from the above, it becomes evident that children must develop meaningful word vocabularies by associating words with experiences--either real or vicarious. Multiple meanings and numerous idiomatic expressions--such as "run the water"--further compound the problem.

Children read to expand both the number and the quality of the meanings that are attached to a single word. Many words, even in the simplest of books, have more than one meaning. Frequently, only by understanding the verbal context can the pupil select the meaning intended by the writer.

The following represent a few simple techniques or ideas for teaching the importance of context in meaningful reading.

1. The child may learn to anticipate meaning through exercises that require the addition of a single word to complete

[1] Emerald Dechant, Improving the Teaching of Reading, p. 363.

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the meaning of the sentence. For example the sentence, "The boy fell _____ the stairs," allows for little deviation in meaning. Other examples might include: "He is sick, call a _____." "Pass the salt and _____."

2. Another method for expanding and building vocabulary is to present a sentence that is complete but that contains a wrong word. The child is asked to eliminate the wrong word and to substitute a correct one in its place. Examples: "There are tree boxes on the table," or "Sue picked up a flour."

Other activities for building word power or vocabulary include:

3. Make New Words From Old

Look at the vocabulary words "credit" and "together". Combined they are made up of fourteen letters. Ask your students to see how many words can be formed by using the letters of these words. Make up at least ten words.

1. Example: TIGHT
2. Example: CHIDE

4. Make an Alphabetical List

Write the following words in alphabetical order in the blank spaces below:

observers	fierce	slopes	emerge
competition	dominate	opportunity	practice

1._____ 5._____

2._____ 6._____

3._____ 7._____

4._____ 8._____

5. Match the Words with Their Meanings

Match the vocabulary words on the left with the meanings on the right. Write the correct letter in the blank space next to the vocabulary word.

1._____fierce	a.	mountainsides
2._____slopes	b.	do something again and again
3._____practice	c.	forceful; wild

6. Identify Antonyms and Synonyms

There are six vocabulary words listed below. To the right of each is either a synonym or an antonym. On the line beside each pair of words, write S for synonyms or A for antonyms.

1. dominate . . . . . control
2. exciting . . . . . dull
3. opportunity. . . . . chance
4. fierce . . . . . tame
5. emerge . . . . . appear

7. Find the Analogies

An analogy is a relationship between words. For example, house is to home as car is to automobile. Complete the following analogies. Circle the correct word.

1. Casual is to informal as modest is to:

   a. bragging b. being a big shot c. clever d. humble

2. Caution is to carelessness as relaxed is to:

   a. at ease b. tense c. happy d. wealthy

3. Headstrong is to easily led as flashy is to:

   a. easy to spot b. bright c. dull d. standing

8. Matching Words with Definitions

Definitions	Choices
This is a piece of clothing	handkerchief
This comes out of a chimney	blanket
This we use when we are sick	smoke
	medicine

9. "Hip" Vocabulary Words

Ask students to translate out-dated words or phrases with more current usages.

bread . . . . . money

cool . . . . . .

tube . . . . . .

10. Unscramble the Nonsense Words

Ask students to unscramble the words listed below.

Nonsense Words	Vocabulary Words
1. sselev	1. vessel
2. evgoya	
3. loag	

The above represent a variety of activities which, if implemented in the classroom, will gradually build and expand upon the learner's vocabulary. It is necessary, however, to keep certain basic concepts well in mind when striving to bring about vocabulary development. These include:

1. Experience with a concrete objective;[2]
2. Labelling;

[2] Dechant, Improving the Teaching of Reading, p. 375.

3. Learning to interpret pictures;
4. Conversation and storytelling;
5. Description, riddle, rhyme and puzzle games;
6. Audiovisual aides;
7. Dramatization, marionette and puppet shows;
8. Constructing and using picture dictionaries;
9. Use of oral and written directions;
10. Fitting objects and words into categories.
11. Play the Word Game

    This word game begins with PADS. There are three boxes under P, three boxes under A, and so on. On the left are three key words: FOODS, PLACES AND ANIMALS. Ask students to fill in all the boxes under P with words beginning with P. In the top row of boxes, all the words must name FOODS.

	P	A	D	S
FOODS	PEACH		DONUT	
PLACES	PARIS		DALLAS	
ANIMALS	PANDA			

Not only is vocabulary development an essential ingredient in the reading process, but the concept of motivation is just as crucial. This concept is more fully expanded in the material that follows.

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TURNING ON THE TURNED-OFF READER

Teachers consistently seek ways to maintain a high motivation level among their students. When they sense a need to examine the classroom climate in this light, they first ask, "What is the problem?" Is it the materials, the content, the teacher, the classroom environment or does the problem evolve solely from each individual learner and his particular needs and interest? The specific reasons for a child becoming disillusioned with school are as diversified in scope as the ways a child learns. Dr. D. C. Berlyne states that physical materials or situations are not inherently motivating. Nor should it be expected that a teacher or parent can give a child motivation. Motivation manifests itself and becomes the basis of learning only when a child interacts with things external to himself - be these people, objects or ideas. Thus, the external environment is a component of motivation which can and must be manipulated by the teacher as part of the educational process.[1]

We find that, in today's society, most teachers are confronted with the perennial problem of trying to activate or motivate students in the classroom. Whenever teachers are surveyed and asked to list their teaching concerns, the question "How can I motivate the students in my classroom?" always surfaces as one of their major considerations. Everyone seems to be looking for a magic formula to arouse interest and enthusiasm in their students. It is usually easy to tell when a child is motivated, because he is actively doing something or his expression indicates that he enjoys participating in that activity. It is harder to learn

[1] D.E. Berlyne, H.I. Day, and D.E. Hunt. Intrinsic Motivation, p. 78.

how a child became motivated, and it is extremely difficult to know why he is motivated. Determining how and why requires a large number of activities and choices in the classroom. This will help to ensure that each child finds at least one thing he enjoys doing, through which he can reveal himself and allow the consequences of his actions to become manifest.

Motivation can only be seen as a function of an individual child acting in a unique way upon the world. According to developmental psychologist Jean Piaget, the child acts upon and modifies his environment to suit his needs and desires but must, in turn, adapt to the demands which the environment places upon him. The impetus or motivation for the child to engage in this interactive process is not something he acquires or is given by someone else. It is, instead, a fundamental property of life. Both development and motivation are intrinsic properties of living matter, and neither can be considered apart from the context in which it occurs. A child's motivation is his interaction with the world of people and things around him. It is his movements as he performs an activity.[2]

The environment of a motivating classroom offers a wide range of options and changes--it is never static, always producing change. As children change their environments, it has the effect of changing them. Teachers have made the statement that a highly motivated classroom comes from kids motivating kids. If children are fully allowed to demonstrate their capabilities, their achievement will stimulate other children.

[2] Walter Drew and Anita Olds. Motivating Today's Students, p. 8.

A child's interest is his motivation. When introducing a new unit of study, a teacher should survey his class to determine what it is he wants them to discover about a given subject. From that point on, a teacher's attitude about the material being discussed can either stifle or enhance a child's interest in discovering more about a given topic. It will help to ignite enthusiasm among the students if the teacher demonstrates some overt interest in the material being discussed. Teachers give directionality to a course of study, but not all information about a subject needs to be given by the teacher. Teachers need to make children accountable for locating and communicating information to their classmates. Children need the framework of having something expected of them and of being respected for what they can do. They also need time and encouragement to bring a task to completion.

Motivation also has a close correlation to a child's image of himself. It is important that all children experience some success in the classroom. We all need to feel good about ourselves. When a child constantly experiences feelings of inadequacy and non-acceptance, he is very difficult to motivate. If a child feels good about himself, he is willing to take chances and to explore. He feels free to offer suggestions and to communicate his ideas before his peers. In order for this to occur, the teacher must have established a safe atmosphere within the classroom.

Schools are for kids, and they must come first. Children must be given time to discover what it is they want to learn. Exploration leads to problem-solving. As a teacher watches children solve problems, he can begin to know and understand his students. It is imperative that the teacher know something about the interest, abilities and levels of understanding of the children within his

class. Then the teacher can become an "advocate learner" who sets the stage, provokes, challenges, encourages and sustains the child's quest for understanding.[3]

The following represent activities which will hopefully involve and motivate students.

HODGE-PODGE OF IDEAS FOR MOTIVATING THE TURNED-OFF READER

Story Puzzles

Mimeograph enough copies of a story to accommodate the number of children in a reading group. Cut the story into one-line strips and mix the strips together in a box. Each child has to sort out the story and arrange the strips in proper order.

Several variations of this idea can be used. For example, a contest can be held by dividing the group into two or more smaller groups. Place the story strips into separate boxes, one for each group. Each team works separately to unscramble the story. The first team to finish is the winner.

What Are They Saying?

Find a picture in a magazine that tells a story. Paste the picture on colored paper. Make up a story suggested by the picture. Write the story or tell the story to a friend. Start a collection of story pictures. Make a cover for the collection. Keep it in the Book Center for others to read.

Synonym Golf

Compile a list of 18 words representing the 18 holes of golf. Players try to find a synonym (word that means almost the same) for each word. The number of letters in the synonym chosen represents the score for the word. Score 18 points for a word for which a player can find no synonym. Lowest score wins.

Mood Pictures

Choose a word such as happy, angry or freezing. Make a picture or a collage to illustrate the word. Use small pictures from magazines, words from newspapers and magazines and your own drawings. Put the word you chose on the back. See if the others can guess what word you picked. Later you can make a story to go with your mood picture.

Chain Story (sequence of events)

Cut strips from construction paper. These strips should be one inch wide and nine inches long. Make a loop from one of the strips and

[3] Diane Divoky, "Teachers Make the Difference," Learning Magazine, (November, 1972): p. 42.

paste the ends together. Write a sentence to begin the story. The next person attaches his loop with his strip depicting the next event in the story. The loops are added as each child adds another dimension to the story.

What's In A Picture? (details)

Look through magazines until you find a picture that you like. Look at the picture for one minute. Then turn the picture over, so that you cannot see it, and write a detailed description of it. When you think that you have described it all in detail, turn the picture right side up and see just how well you did.

Can You Picture That? (figurative language)

Draw a picture to illustrate figurative language or idioms. Place illustrations on individual cards and place in a file box. Have students guess the meanings of the drawing. The pictures should remind you of a figure of speech that people use.

Word Picture

Select a word. Think of many words that relate to the word selected (preferably a noun). Then begin to arrange these words so they form the shape of the original word selected, such as cat. You can select descriptive words such as "soft" and "fuzzy" or a type of cat such as "tom." It can be the sounds a cat makes, such as "meow," or "purr." Or it can be something that a cat does, such as "scratch" or "stalk." The real fun and challenge in making word pictures is to try to use the best words for each part of the picture. The possibilities of word pictures are limitless.

Cartoon (finale of a story)

To stress the significance of the sequence of events, the children can make cartoon strips about their stories. After the four major steps in the story have been established, the child illustrates them on 9x24" strips of drawing paper. The strips are divided into four equal frames, one for each event. All the frames contain "balloons" representing a portion of the dialogue from the story.

Pick-A-Pal Paragraph

Character sketching and analysis are the themes of this project. The child first chooses from his story a character that he would like to have as his friend. On a 9x12" piece of construction paper folded in half, the child draws this character involved in an event from the story. Inside the folder, the child writes a paragraph telling why he chose the character, how they are alike or different and what they would do if they were friends.

Riddle Posters

Extra! Extra! Read all about it! This is the main idea behind the riddle posters. Each child is responsible for making a poster to promote the book he has read. Along with the illustrations about the book, the child incorporates a "Who or what am I?" riddle. Since this is a promotional endeavor, the answer is not included. The other children must read the book to find out the answer to the riddle.

Classroom Basketball

Make a hoop by attaching a bent wire coat hanger to a piece of poster board. A pair of socks or wadded paper can be the ball. Prepare a set of questions in any subject area and divide the class into teams. The teams take turns at foul shooting. If a team makes the foul shot, they have the opportunity to answer a question, worth two points if correctly answered. If the foul shot is missed, the player tries a lay-up from closer in. That shot should be an easy one and gives the team a chance to answer a question for one point.

Blurb File (independent reading)

"What book should I read?" Is this a common question asked in your class? Why not answer, "Look in the blurb file?" This file is an easy-to-make, useful classroom tool. Scan monthly book club and publishers' ads. Locate blurbs about books you have in your classroom or the school library. Cut out these blurbs and paste each on a separate index card. On the back of each card, write several independent activities related to the book "advertised" on the front. If possible, laminate the cards or cover them with clear adhesive-backed plastic. File the cards alphabetically in a box or index file.

Who Am I?

The class is divided into two teams--the "acting group" and the "panel." Stories should be selected which are familiar to the class. Members of the acting group portray a scene from a book, giving short clues which are difficult at first and become easier as the portrayal continues. After each clue, the panel's task is to determine the character or characters and the title of the book. If students on the panel provide the correct answer after the first clue, five points are awarded. Three points are given for providing the correct answers after the second clue. One point is awarded for giving the correct answers after the third clue. The two sides then change positions--the acting group becoming the panel, and the panel members becoming the actors.

After answers have been correctly given, the teacher, acting as moderator, can lead a discussion of the interpretations of characters and events provided by the acting group. This discussion is an additional learning experience.

Extra! Extra!

Make up a headline and a short newspaper article about your book. If you want to work with a partner, you can add a newspaper picture to go with your headline. Put the headline and the story up on the bulletin board to persuade others to read the book. Remember, a newspaper article tells who, what, when, where and why!

Classroom Scavenger Hunt (developing research skills)

Students of any age can go on a scavenger hunt in the classroom using old magazines. Split the class into groups and give each group a stack of magazines and a list of things that must be found. The items to be found might be as simple as colors or as challenging as scientific instruments--and they can be related to any curriculum area. The group that completes its list first wins.

Book Floats

Make a diorama of your favorite book using a shoe box. Decorate the back and the sides of the shoe box with colored paper or paint. Put a small dowel stick through each end of the shoe box. Put small wheels on the ends of the dowel sticks so your float can move. When some floats are finished, show them in a parade to a lower grade in your school.

Help The Author

Select a story with which the class is not familiar. Explain that you will read the story, but you are going to need help. You can state, "At times, I will stop in the middle of a sentence and call on you to see if you know what word comes next." This simple idea permits children at any grade level who are having difficulty with word attack skills to develop confidence in their abilities. Point out at the close of the lesson that it is not difficult to read a story even though one might not know all the words. Do not pause too many times during the presentation of the story or you may break the students' trend of thought.

This activity has the additional benefits of getting children to concentrate as they read or listen and of developing the skill to anticipate what is coming next.

Syllable Sense

Print words on cardboard. Take scissors and cut a jagged or curved line between the syllables of the word. Mix all the parts up and give them to children along with a list of words to go by. They match the pieces and check the word on the list. This gives them double exposure.

Another basic in the reading process lies in the area of effective student comprehension. Techniques for realizing this objective are outlined in "Questioning: A Route to Comprehension."

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QUESTIONING: A ROUTE TO COMPREHENSION

In order to implement an adequate reading program, comprehension becomes a very important consideration. We have to keep in mind ways to improve comprehension: 1) Making certain children understand words and can decode words through use of context and phonics; 2) Asking children questions that require them to make inferences and evaluations about the subject rather than asking them questions that demand simple recall; 3) Planning exercises in listening over a sustained period of time, followed by discussion of the areas in which the teacher thinks the children need to work; 4) Using context exercises in which words are left out of sentences and children must replace the proper words (noun or verb) so the sentences make sense; and 5) Encouraging children to make mental pictures as they read. Developing comprehension and thinking processes requires time and innovation, but adequate readers must possess the ability to function in this capacity.

The purposes that teachers create which require children to read and use these skills are many. They are dependent on the type of questioning and examinations used and the purposes that are established in reading exercises. If a teacher demands simple recall, children tend to read for recall purposes and fail to comprehend the deeper quality of reading material. Children do not have to be gifted or bright to evaluate what they read.

We should not exclude listening skills as a part of our reading process. They should be organized systematicaly along with other reading skills. Think of listening as a means to improve comprehension--not a haphazard process, but a well-organized, long-term

skill to be developed. Poetry is an excellent means of helping children develop mental pictures while they read. Usually selections are short; and a poem illustrates a picture, mood or feeling about a situation or place. The thinking process is put to work.

Listed below are a variety of activities which can bring about more effective student comprehension. What I can think, I can say, I can write, someone can read.

Language Experience

Once [my] dog [got] loose
"house"
[and] [went] far away from home. "horse"
[My] brothers [went] [and] [got] him.

1. Look for words that begin the same.
2. Find m, w, g words that are alike.
3. Cut apart line by line and let children put in sequence.
4. Cut into phrases.
5. Put words on cards and let children build the sentences.

Word and Vocabulary Practice

1. Use a word bank.

   Words used in their oral language are meaningful words to put on practice cards.

2. Gambling with words.

   Put 15 or 20 words on file cards (one word per card).
   Include an additional one or two blank cards.
   Place cards face down.
   One child is the "player".
   One child is the "pronouncer".
   The player points to a card, and the pronouncer picks it up.

He is to:

say the word;

say it in a sentence; and

spell the word (if you want).

Offer one point and another chance if right answer is given. The blank cards make it more fun. If a blank card is drawn, the pronouncer loses all points; but if he mispronounces a word, one point is lost and he loses his turn.

Keep changing word cards to correlate with reading program. Excellent motivation at most any grade level and excitement all year can be sustained.

Spin-A-Yarn

For this activity, use a skein of yarn which has had knots tied every few feet and has been wound into a ball. The children sit in a circle or select about four of five children to appear on the stage. One child takes the yarn and begins to tell a story, unwinding the yarn as he talks. When he comes to a knot, he passes the yarn to the person on his right, and this person continues the story.

A B C Story

Have children write a short paragraph (or sentence) beginning with "a", the second with "b", etc., throughout the alphabet. The story must make sense. Do this with poems--it's fun!

Comprehension: The Main Thought of a Paragraph

Read the list of animals in the following columns:

elephants	dogs
cows	tigers
kangaroos	pigs
lions	cats
horses	donkeys

Give a heading for the list above (animals). Which are wild animals? Which are domestic?

We have two paragraphs. Both have the same title: "A Lion Cub", but the paragraphs are different. Should the title of each be changed to something more definite?

I. A Lion Cub

> Young lion cubs can be as affectionate as kittens. If you hold one of them on your lap, it will relax comfortably in your arms, almost as if it were a baby. Pat it on the head or stroke its fur, and you will hear it purr and wait for you to do it again. If mamma lioness is near, she will be growling softly to warn you to be careful with her affectionate baby. But the cub will pay no attention. It just wants you to go on petting it.

II. A Lion Cub

> Despite its playfulness, a lion cub can sometimes suddenly become an armful of trouble. It may be because you have rubbed its whiskers the wrong way or because you touched a tender spot when you thought you were tickling it. Immediately its sharp claws snap out, and its mouth opens in an angry snarl. Perhaps it does not intend to scratch you or to hurt you with its teeth. Yet its momentary flash of anger can leave you with a painful scratch that you do not quickly forget. All in all, it would be better to leave lion cubs to the care of their mother.

First Paragraph:

What is the paragraph about? (A lion cub)

A troublesome lion cub? (No)

An affectionate lion cub? (Yes) Why?

Second Paragraph:

What is this paragraph about? (A lion cub)

An affectionate cub? A snarly cub? A troublesome cub? Why?

What is the main idea in the first paragraph? The second paragraph? Is the main idea always the first sentence? Look for clues that helped to find the main idea. Would the clues be supporting ideas?

To the Best of My Recollection

Assign two people in advance to act out the dialogue in this prearranged scene. Role-play.

Reading period. You're using the overhead projector. Class attention is focused on the screen. Enter Mr. Smith, a fellow faculty member, to begin the enactment of a prearranged scene.

Mr. Smith tells you he needs the overhead projector this period. In fact, he signed up weeks in advance for this particular time. You say you'll be finished in a few minutes anyway. He insists he needs it now. You try reasoning with him. His voice goes up a notch. You stand your ground. (Stifle the urge to overact, or you'll blow the whole thing.) At last he leaves--with or without the projector (you decide). End of scene.

Immediately have the students take out paper and pencils. Ask for written answers to the following:

1. Does Mr. Smith wear glasses? How was he dressed? What colors was he wearing?
2. Was Mr. Smith carrying anything?
3. What time did Mr. Smith come into the room? How long did he stay?
4. What started the argument?
5. How would you describe the actions and voices of the persons involved?
6. Give some direct quotes from the discussion. (You can add other questions, of course.)

When the students are finished, have them read their answers aloud. The reports will probably vary widely. Individual opinions will enter into descriptions of the action. Feelings about the participants will influence what students thought they heard or saw. Have students listen for the points of difference and the areas of general agreement. Have discussion of the reasons for the differences in answers.

Have students tell how accurate they feel their own reports are. For instance, how would each person rate his answers on a scale of "absolutely sure" to "really couldn't say for certain."

Besides waking up--and possibly shaking up--a few students, this activity serves other purposes: 1) it can help students gain experience in reporting--describing general action and important details; and 2) it can help students appreciate the difficulty of recalling accurately an event they've witnessed.

Be sure to exonerate Mr. Smith, in case some of the kids don't realize the whole thing was a put-on.

ACTIVITIES TO DEVELOP QUESTIONING TECHNIQUES

Practice Exercise #1

Read the story and the questions. Label each question as to the level of comprehension. Then label it according to the thinking process it would promote.

The boys decided that it just wasn't fun anymore. Why would they go ice skating on the rink at the City Center where they would be shoved and pushed by the crowds? It would be much better at the edge of the lake. Gary's brother had said it should be frozen by tonight.

Jerry knew Mom wouldn't like it though. She'd told him often enough about being sure that he skated only at the rink where it was safe, but she didn't know what it was like with so many people

there. Anyway, he was old enough to make some decisions himself. After all, he was going to be 12 next week.

	Comprehension Level	Thinking Process
1. Why did the boys want to go to the lake?	_____	_____
2. What was the temperature?	_____	_____
3. Do you think Jerry was making the right decision? Why?	_____	_____
4. What decisions should 12-year-old boys make?	_____	_____
5. How might the story end?	_____	_____

Practice Exercise #2

Read the story and the questions. Label each question according to the level of comprehension. Then label it according to the thinking process it would promote.

There! He blew it again! He wasn't getting in the punches where they would count. John knew when he was being licked. He might just as well throw in the sponge now and go home. After all, he could always get another day in court just for the asking. Everyone liked John as a sparring partner. He wasn't out for blood.

	Comprehension Level	Thinking Process
1. What does it mean to "blow it"?	_____	_____
2. Was John working or playing? How do you know?	_____	_____
3. Where did John get the sponge he was throwing in?	_____	_____
4. Did John mean he would have to come back to the courtroom another day? What did he mean?	_____	_____
5. What kind of man was John?	_____	_____

Practice Exercise #3

Read the story and the questions. Label each question according to the level of comprehension. Then label it according to the thinking process it would promote.

He was the first boy I ever met at camp. He had gotten there before me, and he and a man were taking things out of a suitcase when I walked into the cabin. He came over and started talking right away. He even shook hands. His name was Michael--Michael Egerton. He was taller than I was, and, although it was early summer, he had a good suntan. I knew he couldn't be more than fourteen, but his face looked old because of the bones under his eyes which showed through the skin.

	Comprehension Level	Thinking Process
1. Did the speaker go to camp many times after this summer?	_____	_____
2. Was Michael very friendly?	_____	_____
3. How old are the boys?	_____	_____
4. The speaker was surprised. Why?	_____	_____
5. How might the story end?	_____	_____

Once the previous techniques and ideas have been explored, there is an additional consideration--the concept of readibility. The next, and last, section offers guidelines for evaluating and understanding your text.

UNDERSTANDING YOUR TEXT - THE CONCEPT OF READABILITY

INTRODUCTION

The selection of textbooks and other reading material for students is a difficult and challenging process. It demands considerable thought and thorough investigation on the part of an administrative and teaching staff. It is of prime importance to base the criteria for selection of a text or other supplementary material upon the teaching philosophy of a given school. If a school has clearly defined goals and objectives for a basal reading program or a reading program implemented in the content area, the selection of textbooks and other material becomes conveniently outlined by the definition of these goals and objectives.

To gain a thorough understanding of reading materials, a procedure must be designed by which a teacher can analyze and select the ones most appropriate for his or her classroom. If materials have already been selected, a procedure can be devised to assess their various strengths and weaknesses.

In this manual are some suggestions for methods which can be used in the evaluation of reading materials, whether they are textbooks or supplementary materials. The methods of analysis include: an evaluation checklist, an explanation of factors involved in readability and suggested means of readability assessment.

The procedure adopted for book evaluation is left to the discretion of the individual and should be based upon methods which best suit local needs.

A thorough and consistent procedure should be designed by utilizing more than one method of book evaluation so that the

final judgment on a book is not based upon the restrictions of either a checklist or a formula.

EXPLANATION OF FACTORS WHICH DETERMINE READABILITY

What is readability? What are the factors which make a book readable? An exploration into the answers to these questions will assist a teacher in understanding how he or she can best match a student's reading ability to the difficulty of the reading materials required for a given subject.

In other words, when the difficulty of the materials is successfully matched with the reading level of the student, the concept of readability is attained. For example, it has been determined that a 7th grader has a reading level of 7.1 and the readability estimate of the seventh grade science text is 7.2. It is reasonable to predict that this student's reading ability will match the readability of the material.

The definition of readability refers to the difficulty of the reading material. The level of comprehension which a student will achieve is dependent upon the readability (difficulty) of the materials he or she is expected to read. The concept of readability involves an interaction between the reader and the book.

Once the distinction between the definition of readability and the concept of readability is made, the questions which logically follow are: What are the factors which determine the readability of a given book? How can the readability of a book be assessed?

Below is a list of factors which affect the readability (difficulty) of reading materials:

Interest Factor

Sentence Length — types of sentences - simple, compound, complex
modifying clauses + phrases

Vocabulary — frequency, polysyllabic
simple, complicated, unfamiliar
obsolete (archaic)
colloquial (indirect reference)
scientific, technical, specific
allusive
ambiguous (inexplicit)
sophisticated parts of speech (variations in meanings)

Concept Load — idea density
abstract--concrete

The most effective way to begin to understand how these factors affect the difficulty of reading material is by understanding how they can increase the difficulty of a single sentence. Below are four sentences ranging in difficulty from simple to complex. As these sentences progress in difficulty, it can be seen how the various factors listed above affect the complexity of the sentence.

Simple ↑ Interest Factor ↓ Complex

1) The cat sat.

2) The terrified cat sat on the rug. (polysyllabic vocabulary modifying phrase)

3) The terrified cat sat on the oriental rug because the person had swung a stick in his direction. (polysyllabic vocabulary, modified phrases and clauses)

4) The terrified cat sought refuge by the warming fire and sat, assured of safety, on the soft oriental rug because the cruel and vicious person had maliciously swung a stick in his direction. (polysyllabic vocabulary, modifying phrases and clauses, idea density)

TASK ASSIGNMENT 1 - SENTENCE READABILITY

Objective: To understand how the various factors involved in readability affect the relative difficulty of a single sentence.

Directions: Beginning with a simple sentence, create three additional sentences which demonstrate a progressively more complex structure. Upon completion of the four sentences, identify the factors from the previous list which caused the sentences to become more complex.

1) _____

_____

_____

2) _____

_____

_____

3) _____

_____

_____

4) _____

_____

_____

TASK ASSIGNMENT II - PASSAGE READABILITY

Objective: To be able to rank the relative difficulty of reading passages.

Directions: Based on your knowledge of the various factors affecting the readability of material, rank the following approximately 100-120 word passages in order of difficulty. An "A" should represent the easiest and a "C" the most difficult. Some helpful suggestions for this assignment are: make a total sentence count for each passage; circle and count words you feel are difficult; assess the repetition of vocabulary; and consider the idea density and interest factor. After ranking each passage, explain how you arrived at your decision.

_____ "Girls in line," she said. "Boys in line." She did not mention washcloths. She only gave instructions.

"Everybody stay in line all the way to the railroad station." Then she had monitors pass around the flags, and she gave the girls bouquets of flowers to toss to the soldiers.

The children stood in line in the hall. The lines stretched back into the cloakroom. All up and down the corridor, other classes were lining up outside their rooms. The youngest classes were to march out first, the oldest last. Room One marched out now with Mr. Pennypepper, the Superintendent, leading in the very front. Room Two was warming up.

_____

_____

_____ On the last day of the Convention, Franklin decided he had the answer. Turning to James Madison of Virginia, he said, "I have often. . . looked at the (sun) behind the president without being able to tell whether it was rising or setting; but now, at length, I have the happiness to know that it is a rising and not a setting sun."

A few minutes later, the last of the delegates signed their names to the Constitution. The Convention's work was done. Now the delegates could take home with them the plans for a new national government.

But what did Franklin mean by a "rising sun?" During the months that it took to write the Constitution, there had been many anxious moments.

_____

_____

_____ Next he found two boxes of bird seed and emptied the whole amount into the cage. Then he found some dried branches that were full of seeds. He poked them between the bars so that they hung down into the cage.

Finally he climbed into the cage and shook the door with all his might. Reba, the parrot, heard and saw him. She flew in to see what he was doing.

"Delicious!" she cried as she began to gobble up the seeds and the lettuce.

Soon all the other birds were in the cage. While they were gobbling up the delicious food, Snick slipped out as quick as a wink and latched the door.

"Remarkable!" squawked Reba.

_____

_____

Answers

A. The passage which is the easiest is the one beginning, "Next he." The interest factor is one which would appeal to younger children. There are 10 sentences, but they are simple ones with few modifying phrases or clauses. There is some challenging vocabulary as emptied, finally, delicious, gobbling, remarkable and squawked, but most of the words are high imagery ones and could be understood once they were pronounced.

B. The passage beginning, "Girls," is more difficult than the previous passage. Even though this passage has 13 sentences, their structure is more difficult with modifying phrases and clauses. The vocabulary is more challenging with such words as mention, instructions, monitors, bouquets, soldiers, corridor, cloakroom and superintendent. These vocabulary words are high imagery words and some are even used less frequently today, e.g., cloakroom. For this vocabulary to be understood, the reader would need some background experience, teacher assistance, and ability to use a dictionary.

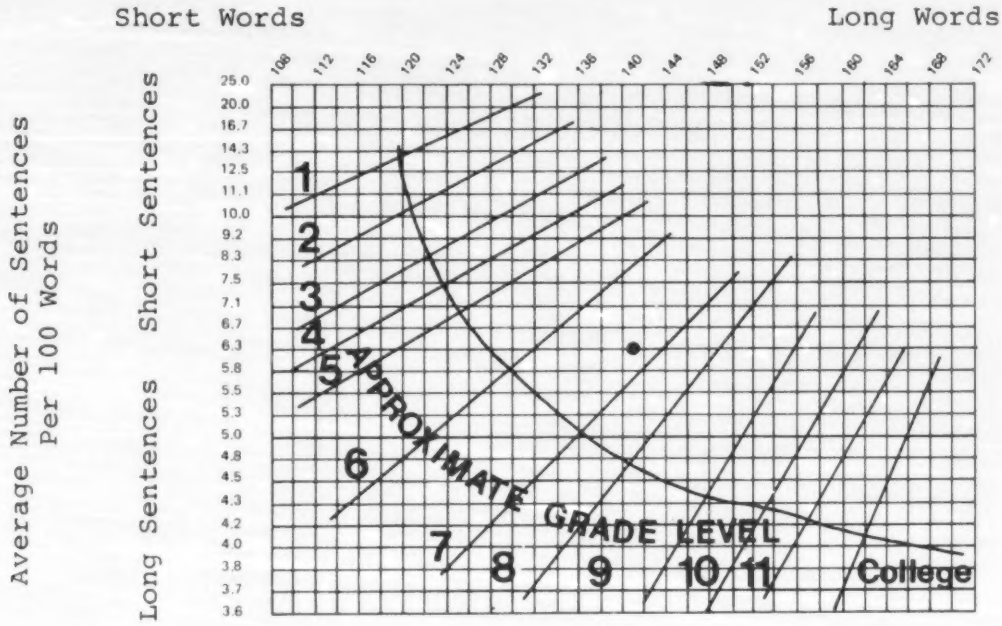
C. The most difficult passage is the one beginning, "On the last day." This passage has an interest factor for a more sophisticated reader. There are seven sentences, and their structure is more complex than the preceding passages. The vocabulary is more sophisticated and would need considerable background experience for the passage to be fully comprehended.

THE FRY GRAPH FOR ESTIMATING READABILITY

by Edward Fry, Rutgers University Reading Center, New Brunswick, NJ

Below are the directions for using the Fry Graph for Estimating Readability. It should be noted that the final index rendered by this graph is but an estimate and should be treated as such. The instructions recommend the analysis of three 100 word passages, but it is suggested that six or nine 100 word passages be used to gather a more representative sampling. The final index should be expressed in a range, as grade level 6-7.

Average number of syllables per 100 words



Directions: Randomly select three 100 word passages from a book or an article. Plot average number of syllables and average number of sentences per 100 words on graph to determine the grade level of the material. Choose more passages per book if great variability is observed and conclude that the book has uneven readability. Few books will fall in gray area, but when they do, grade level scores are invalid.

Example:

	Syllables	Sentences
First 100 Words	124	66
Second 100 Words	141	55
Third 100 Words	158	68
Average	141	63

Readability 7th Grade (see dot plotted on graph)

For further information and validity data, see the April, 1968, Journal of Reading; the March, 1969, Reading Teacher and the Journal of Reading, January, 1977.

BIBLIOGRAPHY OF OTHER READABILITY FORMULAS

For additional information concerning readability formulas, see:

Seels, Barbara, and Dale, Edgar. Readability and Reading, An Annotated Bibliography. Newark, DE: International Reading Association, 1971.

Harris, Albert J., and Sipay, Edward R. How to Increase Reading Ability. 6th ed. New York: David McKay Company, Inc., 1975.

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LOOKING BEYOND THE FORMULA

Although formulas provide an estimate of the readability of a given book, it is wise to have a method available which will either substantiate or look beyond the findings of a formula. Caution should always be taken when using any readability formula, since the index rendered by the formula represents only the factors used in the formula's calculation.

Once an estimate of readability is established by the use of the Fry Graph, the items on the list of factors affecting readability should be used to gather further information about the validity of the Fry estimate. A closer look should be taken at the passages used for sampling in terms of sentence length, vocabulary load, concept load and interest factor.

For example, the Fry formula may render an estimate of 9th grade for a 6th grade reading text; but after further sampling you find that the sentence length is not too excessive, the vocabulary load is not too demanding, the concepts are concrete, and the language structure, interest factor and motivational qualities are appropriate for a 6th grader. Therefore, the text may not be too difficult after all, and it was valuable to look beyond the readability formula.

CHECKLIST TO ACCOMPANY READABILITY FORMULA

The checklist which follows can be used in conjunction with the Fry Graph or another readability formula, since many of the considerations on this list are ones which are used in the calculation of a formula. The list serves as another way of substantiating the findings of a formula.

Considerations in Evaluating Textbooks

Kenneth C. Krause, Journal of Reading (December, 1976)

____ 1. The density of concepts isn't intended to frustrate the student. In other words, each sentence isn't packed with several ideas.
____ 2. The sentence complexity isn't usually high. That is, the authors don't always tend to use long compound and complex sentences.
____ 3. The authors don't continually choose to use long, difficult words when simpler synonyms would suffice.
____ 4. Captions under graphs, tables and diagrams are clearly written.
____ 5. The text contains both a table of contents and an index.
____ 6. The table of contents show a logical development of the subject matter.
____ 7. When the text refers to a graph, table or diagram, the aid is on the same page as the textual reference.
____ 8. Pictures are in color and are contemporary, not dated by dress unless the author's intention is to portray a certain period.
____ 9. Difficult new vocabulary words are highlighted, italicized or underlined.
____10. The main idea or purpose for reading a chapter is stated at the beginning.
____11. The authors include a summary at the end of each chapter.
____12. Various ethnic groups and male and female characters are depicted authentically in the text.
____13. When there are questions at the end of the chapter, there are different kinds (true-false, multiple choice, essay) and they are at different levels of comprehension (literal, interpretive, and application).
____14. At times, the text refers to practical, real life situations students can relate to and have an interest in.
____15. The text includes quotations from other sources and authorities to support its statements.
____16. The text suggests other out-of-class readings and projects to stimulate additional student interest.
____17. The book is recently copyrighted (within the last two years) and the contents genuinely up-to-date.
____18. The text is suitable for achieving the stated course objectives.

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